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ABSTRACT

During the 1989-90 school year, the Russian/Greek Bilingual Comprehensive Instructional program was fully implemented, serving 707 limited-English-speaking native Russian- and Greek-speaking students at seven public and three private high schools. Participating students received instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL), native language arts (NLA), bilingual/ESL content areas (mathematics, science, and social studies), and business skills. Personal and career counseling, tutoring, and parent involvement activities were also provided. The project achieved its objectives in ESL, business skills, attendance, support services, and staff development. The program partially met its objectives for career development and parental involvement, but did not achieve its objective in content area courses. It is recommended that the program lower the target passing rate for content area courses to reflect more reasonable expectations. (Author/MSE)

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OREA Report

RUSSIAN/GREEK BILINGUAL COMPREHENSIVE
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM
Grant Number: T003A80102
1989-90

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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8/90

RUSSIAN/GREEK BILINGUAL COMPREHENSIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM
1989-90

SUMMARY

- The Russian/Greek Bilingual Comprehensive Instructional Program was fully implemented. During the 1989-90 school year, participating students received instruction in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.), Native Language Arts (N.L.A.), bilingual/E.S.L. content areas, and business skills. The project also provided personal and career counseling, tutoring, and parental involvement activities.

- The project achieved its objectives in E.S.L., business skills, attendance, support services, and staff development. It partially met its objectives for career development and parental involvement. It did not achieve its objective in content area courses.

The Russian/Greek Bilingual Comprehensive Instructional Program completed its first year of an Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.) Title VII three-year funding cycle. The program was under the supervision of the Bilingual/E.S.L. Unit of the New York City Public Schools' Division of High Schools. The project offered Russian- and Greek-speaking students of limited English proficiency (LEP) the opportunity to improve their English and native language skills. It also provided students with classes in career education and business skills. The project served 707 students in seven public and three private high schools in Brooklyn and Queens and also served as a resource for non-project schools.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendation:

- Lower the target passing rate for content area courses to one reflecting more reasonable expectations.

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This report has been prepared by the Multicultural/Bilingual Education Evaluation Unit of the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment. Thanks are due to Deborah Adelman for collecting the data and writing the report.

Additional copies of this report are available from:

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment's (OREA's) evaluation of the Russian/Greek Bilingual Comprehensive Instructional Program, a program in its first year of funding under Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The project provided Russian- and Greek-speaking students of limited English proficiency (LEP) with instruction in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.), Native Language Arts (N.L.A.), bilingual/E.S.L. content area courses, computer technology courses, and career education. The project operated at seven public and three private high schools in Brooklyn and Queens. The public schools were Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, James Madison, South Shore, Canarsie, Forest Hills, and Long Island City High Schools. The private schools were Yeshiva Be'er Harama, Archbishop Iakovos, and St. Demetrios. The project also extended some services to non-participating schools by providing them with original and adapted curricula, supplementary instructional materials, and assistance in evaluating newly arrived students from the Soviet Union for placement at their proper grade level.

PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

Seven hundred and seven students were admitted to the project during the course of the year. Of this number, 328 attended both semesters, 236 attended fall only, and 153 attended spring only. (Total fall attendance was 564; total spring attendance was 481.) Most of the students were recent immigrants from the Soviet Union and Greece and came from low- and moderate-income families.

STAFF

Project staff funded by Title VII included a full-time project director who was fluent in English and Russian, six resource teachers, (four bilingual in Russian and two in Greek), four Russian-speaking paraprofessionals/educational assistants, and a secretary.

II. IMPLEMENTATION

Students scoring at or below the fortieth percentile on the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) were eligible for participation in the program. The program admitted students scoring above this percentile if staff felt that linguistic and cultural adjustments were impairing academic performance. The grade advisor and project director interviewed students to help determine grade placement.

Program implementation varied from site to site. In the public high schools, students took courses in E.S.L., N.L.A., Russian or Greek culture and literature, and content area and vocational subjects taught bilingually or using an E.S.L. methodology. At the private schools, instruction consisted of individual and small-group tutorials in E.S.L. and the content areas. The project also offered counseling services, tutoring, vocational services, and extracurricular activities.

Parental involvement activities ranged from parent/staff meetings to career development workshops that encouraged parents to seek training for jobs in which their bilingualism would be an advantage, including that of certified bilingual paraprofessionals.

Parents of Russian-speaking children participated more actively in project activities and became more involved in their children's education than did parents of Greek-speaking students.

Staff and curriculum development activities took place throughout the school year.

III. OUTCOMES

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

English as a Second Language

- A minimum of 75 percent of the participating students will significantly improve their achievement scores in English language skills as shown by the LAB.

Matching data were available for 271 students. The mean gain was 14.0 N.C.E.s (s.d. = 16.5), and analysis indicated a significant improvement in students' posttest LAB scores ($p<.05$).

The project met this E.S.L. objective.

- All of the regular school E.S.L. classes offered to the target students will be more culturally sensitive and directed to the needs of these students, as a result of the advisement and assistance Russian/Greek bilingual resource teachers will provide to the regular E.S.L. teachers, as measured by comparing student progress levels and grades with those of the previous year.

This was the project's first year, therefore it could not provide comparative data.

Content Area Courses

- A minimum of 90 percent of the participating students will pass their final examinations in each substantive subject at the end of each semester as measured by a grade of 65 percent or higher.

While over 83 percent of participating students achieved grades of at least 65 in mathematics, science, and social studies,

the project did not achieve the high objective proposed. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1

Student Achievement in Content Area Courses

Subject	Fall Semester		Spring Semester	
	Number of Students	Percent Passing	Number of Students	Percent Passing
Mathematics	492	88.8	443	83.1
Science	441	85.3	368	85.6
Social Studies	472	89.2	439	84.5

- Over 83 percent of the students achieved passing grades in all content area subjects in both semesters.

Business Skills

- A minimum of 75 percent of the target students will significantly improve their achievement scores in business skills as measured by end-of-semester grades of 65 percent or higher.

In the fall, 94 percent of participating students achieved a final grade of 65 or higher. In the spring, 89 percent of the students achieved a final grade of 65 or higher.

The project met its business skills objective.

NONINSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Attendance

- The attendance rate of the project's students will be at least as good as that of the school as a whole.

The project provided data for the public high school sites only. The attendance rate of these students was greater than that of mainstreamed students at all schools. (See Table 2.)

The project met its attendance objective.

TABLE 2

Attendance Rates of Program and Mainstream Students by School[a]

High School	Program		Mainstream
	Number of Students	Percent Attendance	Percent Attendance
Abraham Lincoln	77	93.3	81.4
Canarsie	16	97.5	84.6
Forest Hills	91	94.2	87.4
Long Island City	15	86.8	80.1
Franklin D. Roosevelt	179	91.2	83.3
James Madison	61	96.3	76.6
South Shore	86	90.4	84.6

[a]Public school sites only.

- Attendance rates of participating students were greater than those of mainstream students at all public school sites.

Support Services

- All of the participating low-income students will have received Title VII bilingual support services as a result of the initial and ongoing selection and evaluation process implemented by this project.

The project reported that all 707 students received bilingual support services. The project met its support services objective.

Career Development

- A minimum of 75 percent of the participating students will set clear career goals and learn the skills needed for employment as a result of the project's bilingual career advisement program as measured by a comparison of department developed pre- and post-attitudinal Russian/Greek questionnaires.

The project did not distribute attitudinal questionnaires as originally proposed. Staff decided instead to speak with students individually, since they felt this would be a more effective and supportive method for determining career readiness and skills. They reported that students did set clear career goals and had, in fact, learned the necessary skills for employment.

Although the project did not supply the specified data, it was successful in meeting its first objective for career development.

- A minimum of 90 percent of the students will use the Russian or Greek languages as a positive force in their career pursuits as a result of project bilingual counseling and project-assisted introductions to Russian/Greek employers as measured by their summer job placement, a bilingual attitudinal questionnaire, and their chosen career path after graduation.

Approximately 200 students were placed in summer jobs, but many other students planned to attend summer school and could not

work. More than 90 percent of the Russian-speaking students expressed the desire to attend college upon graduation. However, the project did not provide the necessary data for OREA to evaluate this objective as stated.

Staff Development

- A minimum of four members of the project staff will have made substantial progress in obtaining permanent New York City Board of Education Greek or Russian bilingual certification as a result of participating in training and certification courses offered by the project in collaboration with LaGuardia Community College, as measured by the College's project liaison's maintenance of student academic records.

During the first year of the project, eight members of the project staff were enrolled in courses at LaGuardia Community College and Brooklyn College. Thus, the project achieved its staff development objective.

Parental Involvement

- A minimum of thirty parents and interested teachers will have attended one of three workshops on careers in bilingual education given at LaGuardia College by the project's college liaison as measured by attendance records kept by the project director.

A minimum of 35 parents and interested teachers attended workshops at LaGuardia Community College. The project met its first objective for parental involvement.

- A minimum of 70 percent of the parents of participating Russian/Greek LEP students will have an improved involvement in and understanding of their children's educational needs and career goal as a result of participating in either an advisory council meeting, a project bilingual workshop, a course offered by LaGuardia Community College, or an individual advisement session offered by project staff.

Participation at meetings varied between sites. In the

private schools, parents of all participating students met with the resource teachers or the community liaison person. At the public high schools, 448 parents of project students attended parent meetings. Eighteen parents, representing both private and public high schools, formed a Parent Advisory Council and met regularly.

The project met its second objective for parental involvement.

- A minimum of five parents of participating LEP students will have taken courses towards New York City Board of Education certification as Russian or Greek bilingual paraprofessionals as a result of advising and/or workshops by project staff as measured by student academic records maintained by the LaGuardia Community College's project liaison and the project director.

During the first year of the project, four parents enrolled in courses at LaGuardia Community College and Brooklyn College. Therefore, the project made significant progress toward meeting this objective but fell short of the projected minimum of five parents. Thus, the project did not meet its third objective for parental involvement.

FOLLOW-UP OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

- A minimum of 20 percent of the participating students will have been mainstreamed into the regular English language high school program because of the support services they receive through the project as measured by their scores on the Native Language Writing and Reading Test and their class grades in their regular English as a Second Language course.

Since this was the first year of the program, mainstreaming had not yet taken place. Therefore, this objective could not be measured.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

In its first year of operation, the project served 707 students in seven public and three private high schools in Brooklyn and Queens and also served as a resource for non-project schools.

The project's strength lay in its provision of individualized services such as counseling and tutoring. For many of the students, these services provided the necessary support to overcome linguistic and cultural isolation and thus facilitated academic success. The project also served as an important resource for non-project schools that were experiencing an influx of new immigrants from the Soviet Union.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendation:

- Lower the target passing rate for content area courses to one reflecting more reasonable expectations.